



# Miscellaneous Civilian Conservation Corps Features: Tucson Mountain Park

## Introduction

Between 1933 and 1941 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was active in the newly created Tucson Mountain Park (TMP), west of Tucson. During that time the CCC was tasked with making improvements to the park for the enhancement of the visitor's experience. In 1961 the northern portion of TMP was withdrawn from the county park and added to Saguaro National Monument (Saguaro National Monument was designated a National Park in 1994). Today most of the CCC improvements may be found within Saguaro National Park's Tucson Mountain District (TMD).

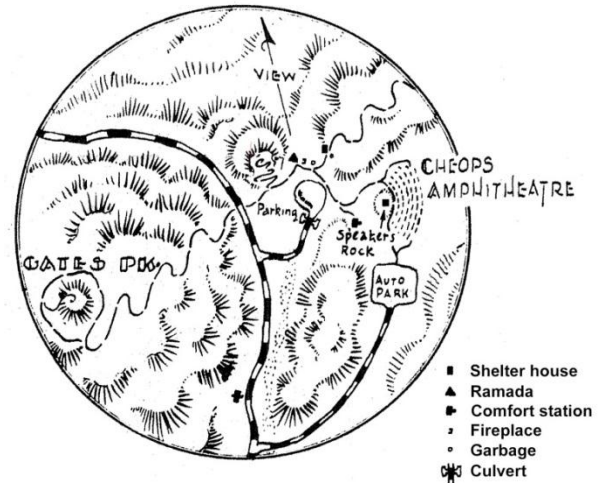
The CCC features described in this resource brief were built by the men of Camp Pima (or perhaps Camp Papago) but are not located within Saguaro National Park. These features are located at Gilbert Ray Campground, Juan Santa Cruz Picnic Area and Gates Pass Overlook, and include a flagpole base, water fountains, culverts, an amphitheater, and a concrete and rock lectern. Also found in these TMP public areas, as well as the ironwood Picnic Area, are many of the typical CCC picnic features found at the TMD picnic sites.

## Water Fountains

This feature type is unique to the Juan Santa Cruz Picnic Area, although a similar feature was found at Camp Papago (Gilbert Ray Campground). Presumably this is because of its proximity to water piped in from Ranger Canyon, just north of the picnic area. The water fountains



**Figure 1.** Two CCC water fountains constructed from large boulders and located at Juan Santa Cruz Picnic Area in Tucson Mountain Park.



**Figure 2.** Detail of 1937 Tucson Mountain Park Base Map showing locations of Speakers Rock, Cheops Amphitheater, and culvert. North is to the right.

are made from large, rectangular shaped boulders that had been drilled through end to end and again through one side to accommodate water and drain pipes. The boulders are about 3' square and have chipped out basins at the top and rock with concrete mortar basins at the foot. The top basins are approximately 12" in diameter by 4" deep, the foot basins are approximately the same size as the top basins (Figure 1). A capped pipe (for hose bib) extends out from the rock above the foot basin. The top of one basin has been filled in with concrete.

## Culvert

This culvert (Figures 2 and 3) at Gates Pass Overlook is made from very large stones. It is still in use today, although the downslope end is partially buried. The culvert is oriented northwest-southeast. Of the five culverts shown on the 1937 Tucson Mountain Park Base Map this is one of two culverts still in existence. The other culvert is along Gates Pass Road and is inaccessible to the public.

Similar culverts of very large stones were also constructed by the CCC for the RMD Cactus Forest Loop. All of these culverts still exist.



**Figure 3. CCC constructed culvert at Gates Pass Overlook.**

### Speaker Rock Lectern

A unique feature found at Gates Pass Overlook is a lectern constructed from stone and concrete, capped with a molded concrete book support (Figures 2 and 4). The lectern, referred to as Speaker's Rock on CCC maps and documents is on a knoll that overlooks Cheops Amphitheater.



**Figure 4. Speaker Rock at Gates Pass with rock lectern and concrete book support. Lectern overlooks Cheops Amphitheater.**

### Cheops Amphitheater

Cheops Amphitheater is a natural hillside on which large flat stones have been placed in loose rows to act as seating (Figures 2 and 5). The amphitheater is 850 feet north of the parking area and faces Speaker Rock. The amphitheater is approximately 200 ft. N-S by 300 ft. E-W.

It is not known whether any talks were ever presented at the amphitheater.



**Figure 5. Close-up photograph of Cheops Amphitheater showing large flat rocks laid out in loose rows.**

### Camp Papago Flagpole Base

There are very few remains of Camp Papago; the best preserved and most accessible is the rock and concrete flagpole base which is still in use at the Gilbert Ray Campground. The feature is in good condition, although it has been modified for the attachment of a modern sign. There are a couple of historic photographs of the flagpole base taken after Camp Papago was converted into the County Preventorium.

The two-tiered rock and concrete flag pole base is 7' in diameter and 3'9" in height. The upper tier has been modified by the addition of a modern sign. The bottom tier is 20" tall and 17" wide. The diameter of the top tier is 4'3" and is 25" in height.



**Figure 6. Recent photograph of the rock and concrete flagpole base constructed by the CCC at Camp Papago, now Gilbert Ray Campground.**

### Visiting the CCC features at TMP

These features are within Pima County's Tucson Mountain Park, please follow all Mountain Park rules and regulations regarding off trail travel. Also, these features are significant cultural resources and therefore protected by state law. Visit with respect.

For more information contact:

Ronald Beckwith  
Archeologist  
Saguaro National Park  
3693 S. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85730

ph: (520) 733-5160  
email: [ronald\\_beckwith@nps.gov](mailto:ronald_beckwith@nps.gov)